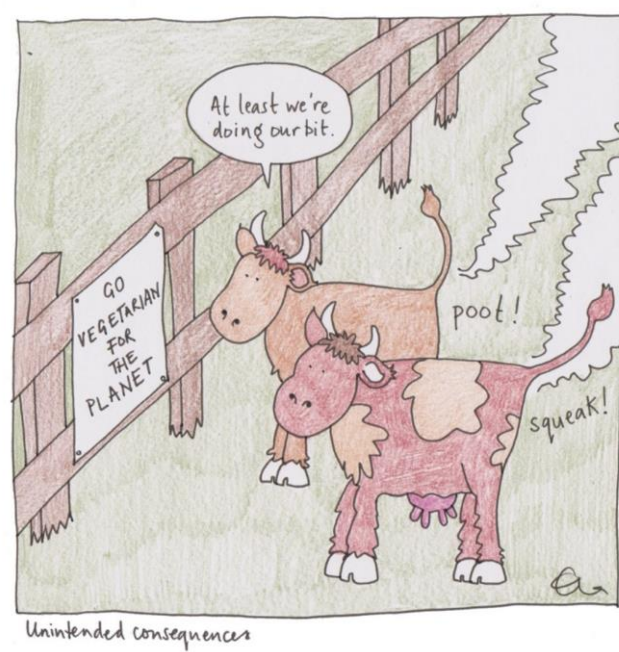


New Internationalist

The people, the ideas, the action in the fight for global justice

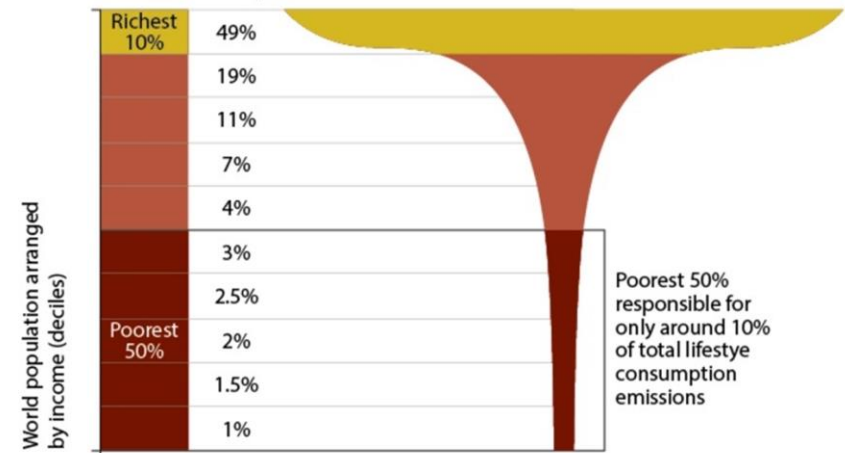
The rich, the poor and the earth

New Internationalist Ready Lesson
Intermediate



This lesson:

- Speaking 1: charts and graphs
- Speaking 2: discussions
- Reading: jigsaw reading
- Vocabulary: collocations
- Writing: a formal letter

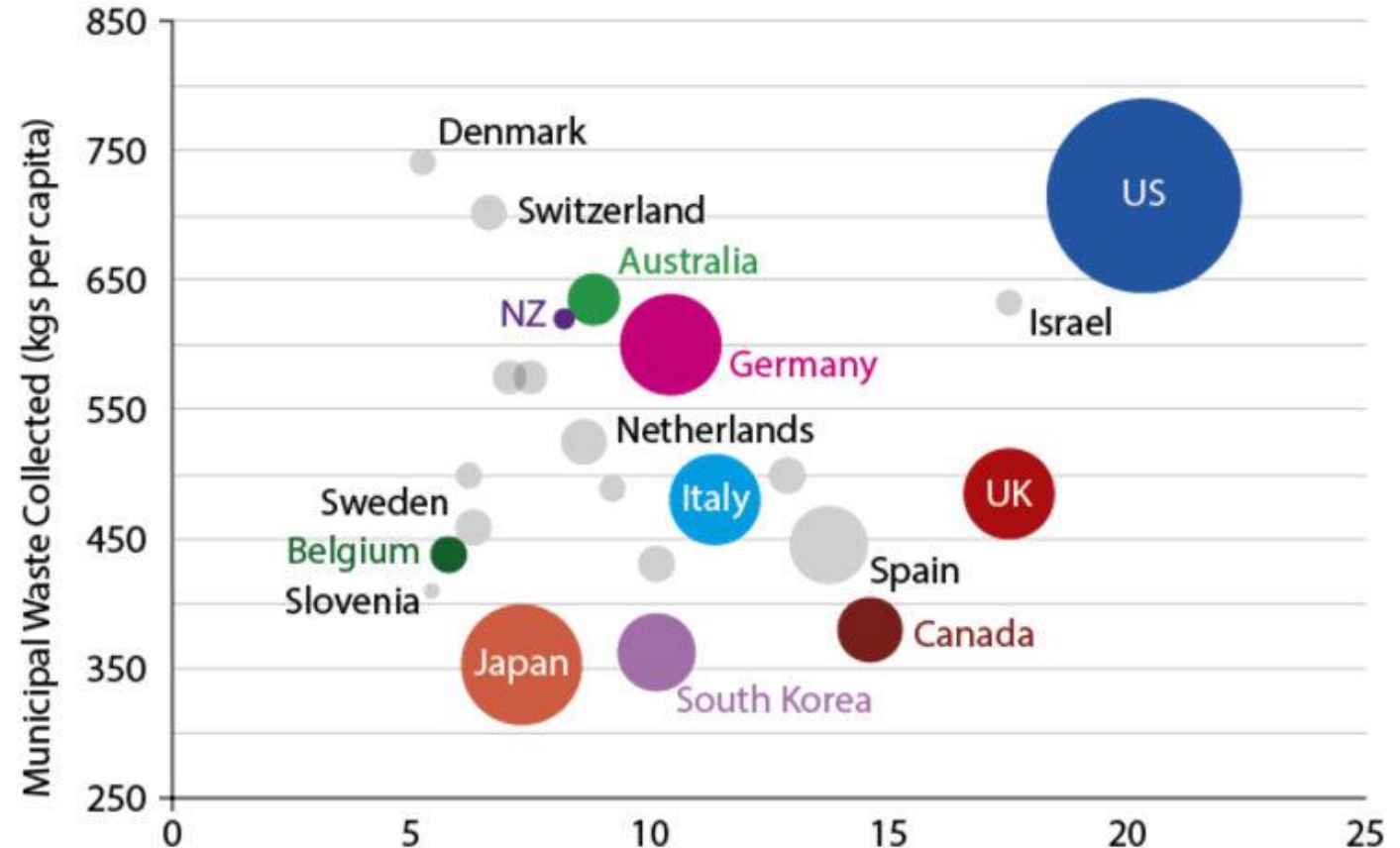


Look at the 4 charts on the next 4 slides –
what do they show about economic equality
and the earth?

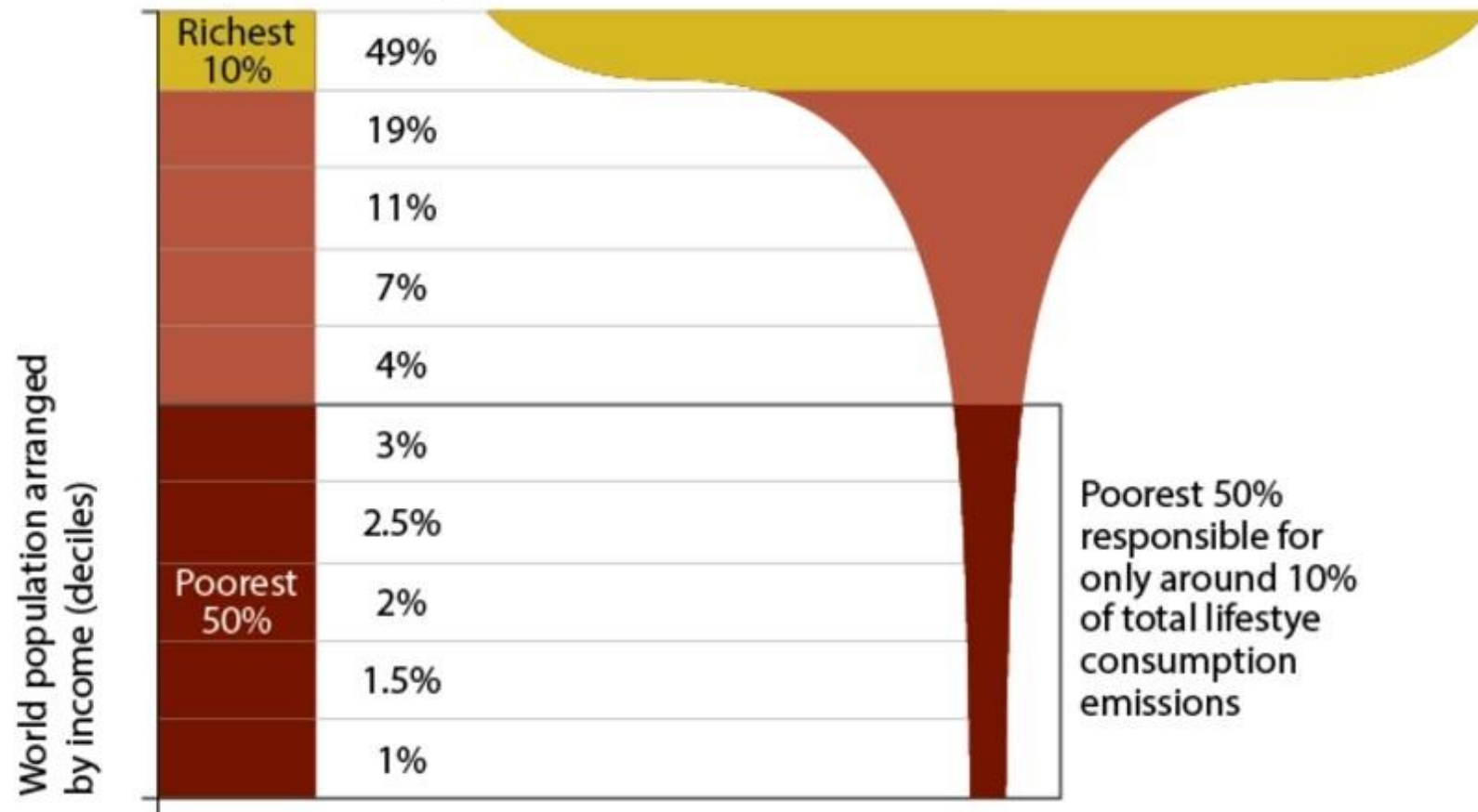
*You can look at all of them and discuss them
in groups, or pairs discuss one chart and
then present to the group:*

a) waste (and economic equality):

Economic inequality and Waste Production (domestic), 2009-13 the richest 10% and the poorest 10% (the countries to the right are more unequal)

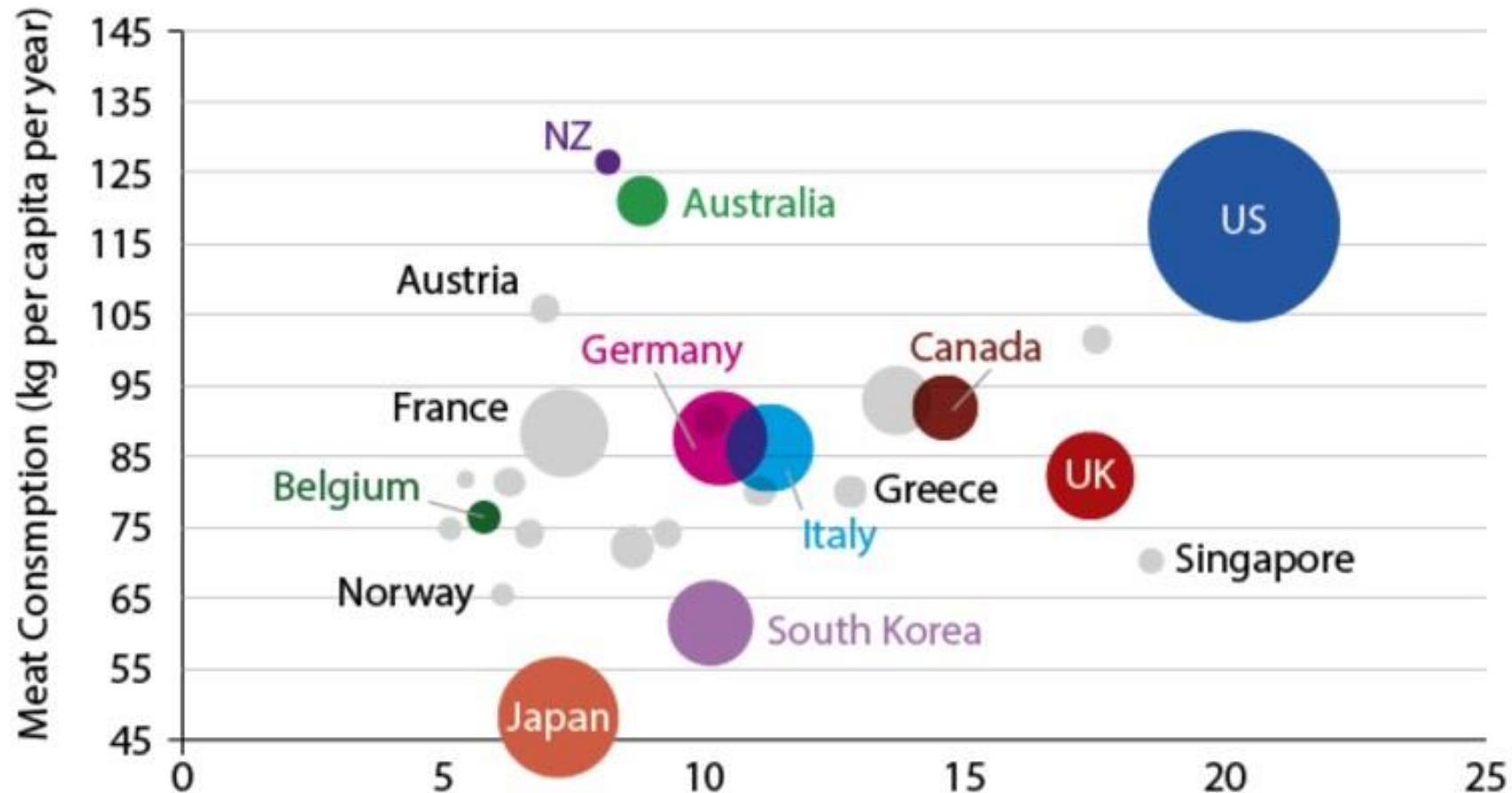


b) CO2 emissions (and economic equality)

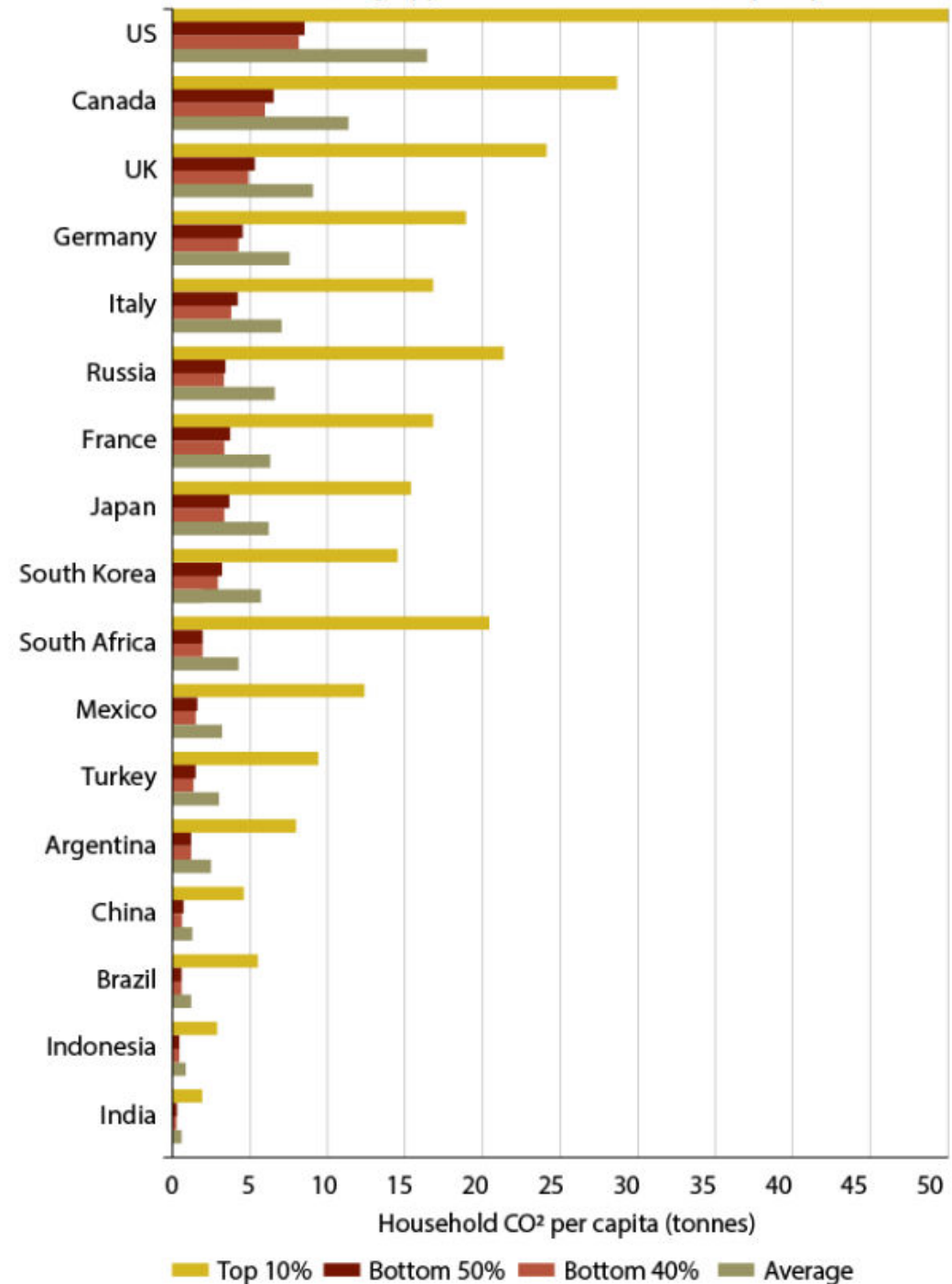


c) The amount of meat people eat (and economic equality):

Economic inequality and meat eating (not fish), 2011 The richest 10% to the poorest 10% (countries more to the right are more unequal). 82 points = eating about one beef steak a day all year



d) CO₂ emissions (and economic equality)



The earth – what are we doing to it?

1)What is 'climate change'?

2)How do we know the world climate is changing?

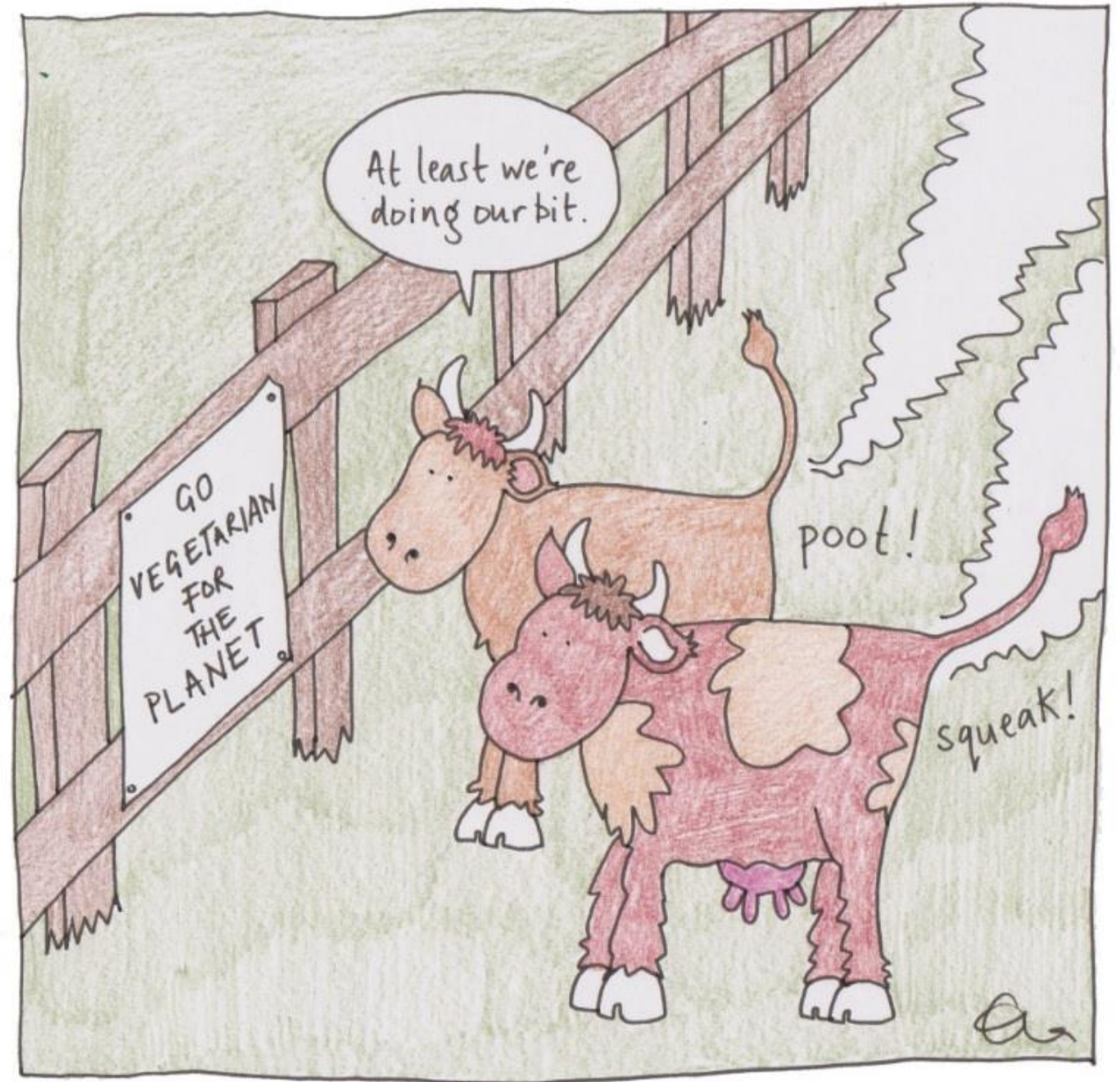
3)Is climate change a serious problem?

What does this short (true) story show? Read, then write a one sentence summary in pairs.

Lake Suwa In 1443 Shinto priests who lived on the edge of Lake Suwa in Japan began to write down the date when the lake froze in winter and when the temperature changes created a ridge of ice across the top of the lake. They believed that the feet of the gods made the ridge when they walked over the lake. So they wrote down the date every year.

In the first 250 years, the lake didn't freeze three times. Between 1955 and 2004 it didn't freeze more than 12 times. Between 2005 and 2014 it didn't freeze more than five times: one year freezing, one year not freezing. Since 2014 it has not frozen. There are many different records of global warming, but the Lake Suwa records are the longest and clearest.

What is the message of this cartoon?:



Unintended consequences

Jigsaw reading:

In groups of 4, one person will read about each of the following:

- a) Waste
- b) CO2 production
- c) Eating meat
- d) Transport

How do these areas relate to equality?

What is the proof?

How can we change?

After reading, discuss all 4 and decide which is the most important to change.

1/ World leaders in waste

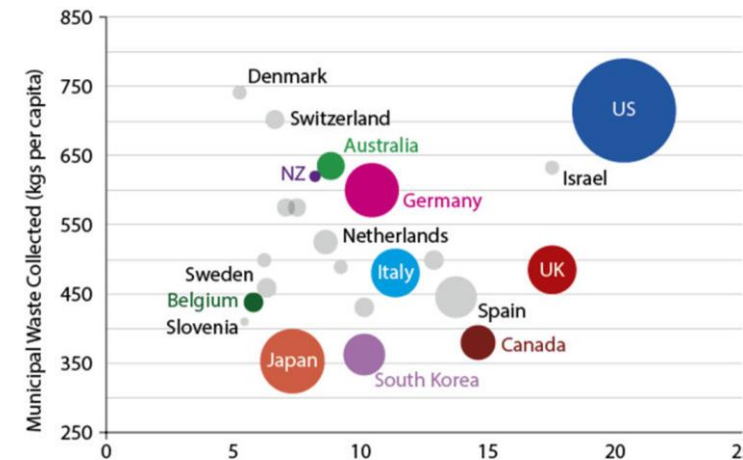
Most of what you buy goes in the bin. We can't keep everything forever. When you buy something, you don't think about throwing it away. But you will throw away almost everything. Maybe you recycle some things, but recycling is not always efficient, and it

uses a lot of energy and produces more pollution. It's much better not to buy things you don't need. But this is difficult in a world where adverts make you buy these things.

In this chart, the countries are the size of their population. The vertical side is about the environment – the countries higher up produce more waste. They should all be in a line from the bottom left to the top right. There are some countries that don't fit – Denmark and Switzerland – maybe because they get more information about their waste than other countries.

More unequal countries usually produce more waste - we would see this even more if the 50 US states were in separate smaller circles. In Japan people generally buy and throw away half as much as people in the US – of everything!

There is a lot of pressure in unequal countries to buy the things other people (especially important people) have, especially with clothes, fashion and new cars. Society tells us to improve and have a better life; not to help the world, but to buy more things. A good job is not a job that helps society, but a job that pays you well.



2/ Equality and carbon dioxide

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is the most damaging form of pollution. People who live in the US produce more CO₂ than any other of the 25 rich countries in our list. The US produces almost twice as much CO₂ per person as Japan, and more than three times that of France.

In general, the more unequal a rich country is, the more CO₂ it produces. But some countries do better. For example, the UK produces less because it uses natural gas from the North Sea and has used the coal that was easiest to mine; 75 per cent of France's electricity production comes from nuclear power – this produces less CO₂ but creates radioactive waste that lasts much longer. But Australia mines and burns a lot more coal (and also mines a lot of uranium).

The average amount of emissions of someone in the poorest 10 per cent of the global population is 60 times less than that of someone in the richest 10 per cent.

In 2015, Oxfam, together with economists like Thomas Piketty, made a report about why some countries produced so much more than others. They found that economic inequality makes people buy and use more in rich countries. This is because richer people usually waste more energy, heat their homes more than they need to, drive more than they need to in bigger cars that use a lot more petrol, take more flights and need more cement and other materials to build buildings that are bigger than they need. Also, they buy and throw away more.

So if you are very rich, money is not a problem and you want other people to see you spending it. In a more equal country, people are usually more careful, public transport is better, and people don't feel they have to be and do the same as people above them so much.

Half the CO₂ emissions in the world from individual lifestyles come from things the richest 10% of people do. These people live more in the most unequal countries.

3/ The problem of eating meat

Eating a lot of meat is not good for you or the planet. If we grow crops to feed animals to eat, we need to grow a lot more than if we simply eat the crops. So a country is less environmentally friendly if the people eat more meat.

Most of the animal life on our planet is now produced on intensive farms. The animals produce a lot of greenhouse gases in their short lives. Cows are the worst. The most common bird on the planet is now the domestic chicken – we only have so many because so many of us in the rich world are now so used to eating cheap meat.

The next chart below shows that the more unequal countries (size = population) usually eat more meat. Again, a few countries do not fit – eg. Australia and New Zealand/Aotearoa, maybe because their cultural histories are closely related to sheep and cattle farms and their high levels of meat production.

Our great-grandparents did not eat much meat, and chicken was often for Christmas Day and some Sundays. Eating more meat has not made us healthier. In some countries we are now eating so much that many people are obese (too fat). Obesity is much higher in rich countries that are more unequal. This could be because the poor people in these countries have to eat cheap fast food – adverts put pressure on them, and fast food often uses lower-quality meat. It could also be because people in more equal countries usually have more education, so they can see how bad it is to advertise fast food and eat too much.

We don't know yet why, but we do know that people in more unequal countries in general eat more meat per person by weight. Where there is more equality, there is less obesity and less meat eating, and the world needs people to eat less meat to protect the soil and biodiversity and cut greenhouse gas production.

4/ Transport: breathing in bad air

We use cars and other transport too much. This produces a lot of CO₂ and other damaging gases eg. carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxides. This pollutes the air we all breathe. Three of the richest 25 countries are extreme: the US, Canada and Australia. Population is not dense and there is often a long way to drive from home to work. But they chose to organize their cities like this. Inequality affected this because people believed that the individual is more important than society and 'the car is king'.

The UK, Singapore and Israel use less petrol / gasoline - this shows that very unequal countries do not have to use so much. These three countries have big cities that can only work with good public transport eg. underground trains, buses and trams. No equal rich country uses more than half as much gasoline per person as Canada and the US do each year. We will all have to use a lot less fossil fuel soon. It will be much easier to do this in a country that understands that we need to develop good public transport that does not pollute much.

We can also see how equality affects the environment when we look at the rich and poor inside different countries. Oxfam found (in the December 2015 report) that the richest 10% in the US produced more pollution than everyone else: about 50 tonnes of CO₂ per person per year. The top 10 % in Canada were the next most polluting, followed by the British, Russian and South African top 10% - you can see this the graph below. In more equal rich countries eg. South Korea, Japan, France, Italy and Germany, the rich pollute less, and also average pollution is lower because the poorest half of the population in those societies also pollute less (even though they have more money) than the poorest half of the population in the US, Canada or Britain. The equality effect is clearly also an environmental effect. The poor pollute less when they have more money and the rich pollute less when they have less money. Or we could look at something simple like how many people cycle or walk to work in each country: 50 per cent (in the Netherlands) to less than 5 per cent (in the US).

Everything is connected. People are fatter in the US because they eat more food; because they sit in cars more often and for longer; because they see more advertising and eat more and so buy more cars; because they are more afraid of crime and so they are afraid of not walking/ cycling; and because they see other obese people, so they don't feel unusual if they are fat. But behind all of these is the basic difference in equality.

It is important to people to know their rank. If you pay them a lot more than other people, they lose respect and empathy for poorer people because they think they are important. If there is less difference between rich and poor, people see that they are like others. Then they fight for cycle routes, pavements to walk on, good public transport, and to be able to live near where they work. The equality effect influences almost everything we do and so much about us.

Vocabulary: Match these **verbs** and **nouns** to form 'collocations', then use the phrases in sentences to talk about 'The rich, the poor and the earth':

Verbs:

throw away

recycle

create

burn

grow

become

advertise

protect

Nouns:

coal

waste

biodiversity

obese

radioactive waste

crops

fast food

eg. throw away waste

Writing:

In pairs, write a formal letter to someone important (a politician / country leader) to tell them about the proved links between economic equality and protecting the planet.

Remember to:

- lay out the letter correctly
- explain your points clearly and logically
- proof-read carefully
- use some of the collocations

123 Broadway
City, State 12345
(000) 111-1111

July 16, 2012

Director
Corporation
123 Pleasant Lane
City, State 12345

Dear Sir or Madam,

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Etiam fermentum lacinia odio, quis tincidunt neque suscipit ut. Donec neque nisl, volutpat sed posuere eget, congue et odio. Donec eu neque tortor. Pellentesque lacinia, arcu vitae molestie euismod, lectus est sodales nisi, id vehicula nisl massa vel felis. In hac habitasse platea dictumst. Aliquam dui erat, bibendum et posuere eget, placerat sit amet ipsum. Phasellus congue, est ac cursus tempor, tellus nibh rhoncus arcu, sit amet scelerisque magna turpis nec turpis. Sed lacinia orci ac nunc convallis feugiat. Sed molestie, nisl et scelerisque consequat, elit quam pellentesque sem, eu pharetra mi elit quis libero. Mauris porta urna in orci sagittis fermentum. Aenean nec elit id ligula venenatis ornare. Nam urna neque, aliquet in sollicitudin sed, molestie ut tellus.

Vivamus consectetur, mauris sit amet pharetra pharetra, tortor ante dignissim purus, vitae pellentesque ante lorem eu magna. Morbi at leo leo. Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent per conubia nostra, per inceptos himenaeos. Sed feugiat volutpat risus, a ullamcorper magna dictum quis. Nam dictum enim et lectus consectetur consectetur. Vestibulum vitae eros vel elit venenatis ornare ac sed felis. Nunc et laoreet libero. Cras ut fermentum dui.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

John Smith

P.S. You can find additional information attached to this letter.

encl: Copyright permission form

Homework:

Read the original (more difficult) article:

<https://newint.org/features/2017/07/01-equality-environment>

- it will now be far easier to understand and you will learn a lot of new vocabulary and grammar.

